

against the Byzantine Empire weakened the Sasanian Persian Empire in the mid-seventh century and contributed to its fall to Muslim armies.

The students now turn to the emergence of the religion of Islam, as they study the question: **How did Islam develop and change over time? How did Islam spread to multiple cultures?** Along with Judaism and Christianity, Islam is an “Abrahamic” religion, that is, a faith built on the ancient monotheism of Abraham. Beginning in 610, Muhammad (570-632 CE), a resident of the small Arabian city of Mecca, preached a new vision of monotheistic faith. According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad, an Arabic-speaking merchant, received revelations from God, which were written down in the *Qur’an*. This message declared that human beings must worship and live by the teachings of the one God and treat one another with equality and justice (equality and justice were only available to believers, this is repeated in many different way in the Qur’an, Hadith and Islamic scholarship, (Islamic definition of equality and justice is different from western definiton, the kids will be mislead)) Divine salvation will come to the righteous, but those who deny God, “Allah” in Arabic, will suffer damnation (line about justice and equality becomes meaningless in next sentence- this is confusing to the kids). God’s commandments require all men and women to live virtuously by submitting to Allah and following the Five Pillars(virtue is defined as submission to Allah and Islam). Like Christianity and unlike Judaism (traditional Jews do believe in an afterlife), there is an afterlife in Islam; faithful believers are promised paradise (and martyrdom, dying in defense or for spread of Islam is rewarded with 72 virgins and eternal life) after death. Islamic teachings are set forth principally in the *Qur’an* and the *Hadith*, the sayings and actions of Muhammad. These were the foundation for the Shariah, the religious laws governing moral, social, (civil and criminal laws via theocracy as well as opposed to the other 2

major faiths) (authors are supposed to identify differences) and economic life. Islamic law, for example, rejected the older Arabian view of women as “family property,” declaring that all women and men are entitled to respect and moral self-governance, even though Muslim society, like all agrarian societies of that era, remained patriarchal, that is, dominated politically, socially, and culturally by men. (last claim about women is factually inaccurate and of particular concern because of the treatment of women in Islamic states and cultures today)

Muhammad also founded a political state (called a caliphate –theocracy) in order to defend the young Muslim community. He led armies of desert tribes to take over all of the Arabian peninsula. After his death, the leaders of the Muslim community chose one of his followers to be their new leader, with the title “caliph.” The caliphs sent armies northward to conquer part of the Christian Byzantine Empire and all of the Persian Sasanian Empire. As the Muslim conquests multiplied, the Umayyad dynasty of caliphs ruled an empire called the Umayyad Caliphate. Muslim armies continued to conquer land until by 750 CE, the Umayyad Caliphate extended from Spain to northern India. Muslims did not force Christians or Jews, “people of the book,” to convert (in Madinah, Yathrib – Islam got first burst of expansion by killing hundreds of Jews) but people of other religions were sometimes forced to convert. Non-Muslims had to pay a special tax to the caliphate.(on many occasions Jews and Christians who refused to convert were slaughtered, despite their status as “people of the book”. And when not murdered were treated as second class citizens in areas other than just paying a heavy tax)) Gradually more and more people in the caliphate converted to Islam, and Arabic, the language of both the conquerors and the *Qur’an*, achieved gradual dominance across much of Southwestern Asia (except in Persia) and North Africa. (Violence and coercion were the most used methods

used to spread Islam The Umayyad caliphate broke into several states after 750, but most of the Middle East remained unified under the caliphs of the Abbasid dynasty (751-1258) with its capital in Baghdad.

The teacher introduces the new capital of Baghdad as the next site of encounter, with the question: **What were the multiple ways people of different cultures interacted at sites of encounter, such as Baghdad?** The teacher asks students to think about what they have just studied about the spread of the Muslim Empire as one way people of different cultures interact. That is, Arabs, who were nomadic tribesmen from Arabia, converted to a new religion, and inspired by that religion, fought wars against other cultures. One type of cultural interaction is war. After the conquest, people of other cultures had to live under Umayyad Muslim rule and pay special taxes (and other second class status in areas of civil and criminal law, as well as prohibition on building religious houses of worship) if they belonged to another religion. This type of cultural interaction is called coexistence in communities. Another type is adoption and adaptation. Some of these conquered people adopted the new religion for various reasons, such as religious conversion, access to political power, and socio-economic advantages. As they converted, they changed their names, their social identity, and associated with Muslims in their area, rather than with their home group of Jews, Christians, or others. (it was common for these conversions to be motivated through coercion and threats of violence) Over time, they adopted more of Arab culture as well. However, as they adopted the Muslim religion and Arab culture, they also adapted religious and cultural practices to accommodate local customs. For example, the custom of secluding elite women inside a special part of the house and only allowing them to go out when their hair and most of their bodies were covered predates the religion of Islam. (teachers might ask

students to research, “where in the world today are women forced into this same kind of inferior status? Can we detect a historical thread from the past into these contemporary situations?) (This is why we teach history, to connect causes from the past to effects today and thus learn how to avoid the same mistakes and evaluate the nature of different cultures and religions) It was actually a Persian and Mediterranean (and ancient Athenian) custom. Before Islam, Arabian women were not confined to the household. The Persians and Mediterranean people who converted to Islam adapted social practices to include their custom. This is just one example of the cultural adaptation process.

Under the Abbasids, Baghdad grew from an insignificant village to one of the leading cities of the world. The city’s culture was a mix of Arab, Persian, Indian, Turkish, and Central Asian culture. The Abbasids encouraged the growth of learning and borrowing from Greek, Hellenistic, and Indian science and medicine. They built schools and libraries, translated and preserved Greek philosophic, scientific, and medical texts, and supported scientists who expanded that knowledge. In Baghdad and other Muslim-ruled cities, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish scholars collaborated to study ancient Greek, Persian, and Indian writings, forging and widely disseminating a more advanced synthesis of philosophical, scientific, mathematical, geographic, artistic, medical, and literary knowledge. (true but Christians and Jews still lived as second class citizens) To investigate the question: **What did the interaction of Arab, Persian, Greek, Hellenistic, and Indian ideas and technologies at Baghdad (and the Abbasid caliphate) produce?** students analyze visuals of libraries, schools, and scientific drawings from Muslim manuscripts, the circulation of “Arabic” numerals, and words of Arabic origin (such as algebra, candy, mattress, rice). The teacher sets up a gallery walk and provides student groups with a source analysis

template. The template asks students to record source information, describe the contents of the visual, and cite evidence from the visual that answers the lesson question. Students share some of their observations and answers to the whole class, as the teacher lists the products on the board. Then the teacher guides students through developing a one-sentence interpretation that answers the question. The students then return to their groups to discuss the evidence they have gathered. The teacher stresses that they should choose the best two pieces of evidence from their gallery walk. The group chooses two pieces of evidence and each group member completes an evidence analysis chart (with columns for evidence, meaning, significance, and source). The teacher displays several group charts on the elmo, clears up any misconceptions, and showcases examples of good evidence choices, analyses, and citations.

After 900, the Abbasid Empire began to fragment into many smaller states. However, the common knowledge of Arabic, the pilgrimage to Mecca, and extensive trade and travel unified the Muslim world. Islam continued to spread, ~~sometimes by conquest~~ (most times by conquest), (this is a critical distinction if the kids are to properly evaluate what is happening today in terms of Islamic terror) but also by the missionary work of Sufis and traveling Muslim merchants. Sufi saints and teachers combined local and Islamic traditions, and inspired common people on the frontier areas of the Muslim world – east Africa, Southeast Asia, and India – to convert. (questionable significance in spread of Islam)

The History Blueprint is a free curriculum developed by the California History-Social Science Project (<http://chssp.ucdavis.edu>), designed to increase student literacy and understanding of history. Three available for free download from the CHSSP's website, including Sites of Encounter in the Medieval

comprehensive standards-aligned unit for seventh-grade teachers that combines carefully selected primary sources, original content, and substantive support for student literacy development. For more information or to download the curriculum, visit: <http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/historyblueprint>.

The teacher now tells students that they are going to look at Western Christendom and the World of Islam together through studying the site of encounter in twelfth-century Norman Sicily, using the History Blueprint's Sites of Encounter in the Medieval World unit, starting with the question: **Why was Norman Sicily a site of encounter?** Because of its geographical location, multicultural population and tolerant rulers, the Norman kingdom of Sicily was a major site of exchange among Muslims, Jews, Latin Roman Christians, and Greek Byzantine Christians in the twelfth century. At the same time, Latin Christian crusaders were battling with Syrian, Arab, Egyptian, and North African Muslim warriors over territory and religious differences. Whereas in the past historians placed emphasis on religious differences and the Crusades, historians now emphasize the common features of these Mediterranean cultures and the many ways in which Christians, Muslims, and Jews interacted. (the emphasis should be on the facts and what had the greatest impact - good, bad or indifferent) The Sicily lesson reflects this new world history approach to the medieval Mediterranean. Rather than directly teaching one interpretation, the teacher presents the primary sources, guides students through analyzing them and gathering evidence, and asks students to form their own interpretation to answer the question: **Was there more trade (with peace and tolerance) or conflict (especially conflict between religious groups)?** Students investigate Al-Idrisi's world map, excerpts from Geoffrey Malaterra and Ibn Jubayr,

documents from the Cairo Geniza and the Venetian archives, lists of trade goods, and visuals of objects created and sold in Sicily through map activities,